



Chris Koster

Missouri State Senator

2008 Legislative Highlights: Part 2 District 31

Encouraging Job Growth

Senate Bill 718 increases the maximum amount of annual tax credits that can be issued under the Quality Jobs Act from \$40 to \$60 million and extends the program through August 2013. The bill also increases the cap on annual tax credits issued under the Enhanced Enterprise Zone program from \$14 to \$24 million. These changes are designed to continue to encourage companies to provide high-paying jobs to hard-working Missourians.



Cracking Down on Cyber Crimes

Internet harassment and stalking is officially now a crime in Missouri. Senate Bill 818 expands the crimes of harassment and stalking to include communication by any means, including electronic communication. It also toughens the penalties for committing the crime and requires school boards to have a written policy requiring administrators to report crimes of harassment and stalking committed on school property to law enforcement.



Stopping Copper Theft

Copper theft is a growing problem in Missouri with the dramatic increase in metal prices. Senate Bill 1034 protects farmers, homeowners, businesses and utilities from the theft of industrial metals by requiring stronger record-keeping procedures by scrap metal dealers. It also increases the penalties for stealing or unlawfully selling copper, brass, bronze and aluminium.



Protecting Seniors

Senate Bill 720 creates a hot weather rule from June 1 to September 30 each year. During this time, utility companies are prohibited from disconnecting service to past-due residential customers on days when either the temperature is expected to rise above 95 degrees or the heat index above 105 degrees for the following 24-hour period.

Supporting Agriculture

The Legislature continued to make agriculture a priority by passing SB 931, a large-scale ag bill. The measure makes participation in the USDA's National Animal Identification System program voluntary, creates a state sales tax exemption for the purchase of fuel used for agricultural purposes, fencing supplies and any equipment used in forestry, and issues an income tax credit for the costs of building an alternative fuel station.



Increasing Deputy Sheriffs' Pay

Completing the work Sen. Koster began three years ago, salaries for deputy sheriffs will increase under HB 2224, which allows sheriffs to collect an additional \$10 fee for processing any civil summons, writ, subpoena or other court order. The funds will go to bolster the pay of county deputy sheriffs, who make an average annual salary of just more than \$22,000 (around \$15,500 take home pay — and below the poverty level).

Fighting Mortgage Fraud

Mortgage fraud is now a Class C felony in Missouri. Prior to HB 2188's passage, only the FBI was able to prosecute mortgage fraud, which includes illegally inflating property appraisals, concealing a second mortgage from a primary lender, or concealing a borrower's identity. The bill also creates civil penalties for mortgage fraud, as well as penalties aimed at real estate professionals.



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